United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, says that without cease-fire in Yugoslavia he can not recommend establishment of United Nations Peace-keeping operation in that country to Security Council.

- United Nations inspection mission reports discovery of chemical bomb-making equipment at sugar factory in Mosul, Iraq.

- Secretary-General to travel to Washington D.C. tomorrow, 12 December, for talks with United States President and to meet former hostages.

- General Assembly calls for full cooperation with United Nations plan for Western Sahara; defers action on composition of Security Council until 1992 session.

- Social Committee approves text proposing the designation of senior official in Secretary-General's Offices to deal with requests of Member States organizing elections.

- Former President of World Bank, at briefing at Headquarters, reiterates 1968 call for population stabilization saying world population has grown by 2 billion since then.

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The Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance, stated yesterday that under the current circumstances in that country, he could not make a recommendation to the Security Council for the establishment of a United Nations peace-keeping operation there. There had not been "sufficient progress at all" with regard to the cease-fire, he said.

Just back from his fourth mission to Yugoslavia, Mr. Vance was speaking to correspondents at Headquarters following a day-long meeting with Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

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In reply to questions, Mr. Vance said there had "not been to this moment" compliance with the Geneva Accords of 23 November between the three Yugoslav parties for an immediate cease-fire. Asked if he was disappointed, he said his mission did accomplish an objective of getting the support of all the parties in the humanitarian area.

Mr. Vance said his team had also made good progress in putting together an "operation plan" for the possible deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force. But, proceeding with the United Nations peace-keeping efforts depended on the full compliance with the Geneva Agreement, he said.

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The first combined chemical and biological weapons inspection team to Iraq has reported the discovery of chemical bomb-making equipment at a sugar factory in Mosul, 350 kilometres north of Baghdad.

The United Nations inspectors found equipment from a bomb casing workshop which, according to a June directive by the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, should have been moved to the Muthanna State Establishment for destruction early next year. The items found were clearly intended for the manufacture of aerial bombs for the delivery of chemical warfare agents.

In a press release today, the Special Commission said that the 18-member United Nations expert team had inspected 16 sites throughout Iraq, looking for evidence of undeclared chemical and biological weapons activity. The mission was unique, it said, in that all designations were undeclared sites, and concentrated on possible chemical or biological weapons storage sites, such as airfield bunkers and ammunition depots. All inspections were carried out without advance notice to the Iraqi side. The mission used United Nations helicopters as a fast means of transport and for conducting aerial reconnaissance.

The team further reported the discovery at an ammunition storage facility west of Karbala of three undeclared SCUD transporter carriers, which had apparently been discarded and overlooked. The Iraqis were directed to move these carriers to Taji for future destruction.

On a number of occasions, the Special Commission says, the inspection team was hindered when carrying out the inspection. However, following the registering of an official protest by the Chief Inspector, the Iraqi authorities concerned were cooperative for the remainder of the inspection.

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The Secretary-General's Spokesman said today that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar would travel to Washington D.C. tomorrow afternoon for a meeting with United States President George Bush. He said the visit was at the invitation of the President and that the Bush Administration wished to express to the

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Secretary-General its gratitude for his efforts with regard to the release of the hostages. Present in Washington D.C. would be former hostages, Thomas Sutherland, Joseph Cicippio, Alann Steen, Jesse Turner and Terry Anderson.

The Secretary-General would be back in New York in the evening for a meeting with the President of Mexico.

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The General Assembly this morning urged parties in Western Sahara to continue to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in carrying out a self-determination referendum in the Territory. The Assembly took that action by adopting, without a vote, one of 12 texts recommended by its Fourth Committee (Decolonization), whereby it endorsed the Security Council's appeal to the Moroccan Government and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) in regard to the United Nations referendum plan.

Among other decisions adopted, the Assembly called on all Governments and organizations of the United Nations system to take all possible measures to ensure the permanent sovereignty of the peoples of colonial and Non-Self-Governing Territories over their natural resources.

As its first item this morning, the Assembly took up the question of equitable representation and an increase in the membership of the Security Council, hearing from eight speakers, however, no action was taken on the subject as the Assembly decided to defer further consideration on the composition of the Council until its 47th session next year.

Among the speakers on that topic, the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, said the configuration of power in the world had changed radically and the role and function of the United Nations had undergone important changes since its inception. In the face of such realities however, the Security Council had been the least responsive and its structure was not in accord with present day reality. He said regional groups were not equitably represented, adding that the arrangement under which 3 of the 5 permanent "veto-weilding members" were from the Western Europe and Others Group and 1 each from Asia and Eastern Europe Groups, while Africa and Latin America had no such members, "could hardly be said to be democratic".

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A proposal to designate a senior official in the Secretary-General's Offices to act as a focal point in the handling of requests of Member States organizing elections, was approved yesterday by the General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural).

By the text, the Assembly would endorse the Secretary-General's wish to designate a senior official for that purpose. It would also ask the Secretary-General to allocate, whenever appropriate and within existing resources, a small number of staff and other resources to support the

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designated senior official. The Assembly would also ask the Secretary-General to establish a voluntary trust fund for cases where the requesting Member State was unable to finance the electoral verification mission.

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Reiterating his 1968 statement that the record growth of population was one of the greatest barriers to economic growth and social well-being, Robert McNamara, former President of the World Bank, said yesterday that it was essential that both developing and developed countries move to "optimize the rates of population growth across the world". That could be done, he said, by accelerating rates of fertility reduction, by expanding contraceptive programmes and the use of family planning. The former World Bank president stressed that this action must be taken in this decade.

Speaking at a press briefing at Headquarters, Mr. McNamara pointed out that in the twenty-three years since he first made the statement, world population has grown faster than ever before, increasing by some 2 billion and now standing at 5.4 billion. The high rate of population growth had aggravated poverty in the developing countries and adversely affected the role and status of women and children of the world, the former World Bank president said. It had risked the destruction of the physical environment and endangered the ability to move to paths of sustainable development.

Stressing the importance of assistance to developing countries to help them achieve their optimum population objectives, Mr. McNamara said failure to do so would condemn "hundreds of millions " of people to poverty. He said it would cost some $8 billion to achieve world population stabilization of some 9.7 billion people by the end of the decade.

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